Science and civil society: lessons from an organization at the borderland

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ABSTRACT: This article explores the sorely overlooked role of science within the civil society scheme, subscribing a scientific sphere of influence according to the minimalist civil society model. It first introduces the relevance of this sphere to the civil society project as a whole, and then provides a case study of one organization of scientists, the Society for the Psychological Study of Social Issues (SPSSI), situated on the border of the science and civil spheres. The study reviews SPSSI's successes in advancing values today associated with civil society, and then examines more closely the challenges that have been posed to such activities by the state, market, science, and civil realms alike. These challenges, it is argued, are a threat to all organizations seeking to advance the values of civil society, and such organizations would do well to prepare for the probable interference by each of these spheres as SPSSI did not. In addition, those aspects of SPSSI's history unique to social scientific endeavors can illuminate challenges which civil society researchers share as social scientists with a particular social vision. SPSSI's perpetual negotiation of two sets of tensions – that between elitism and democratic values; and that between scientific neutralist and social engagement – reveal the paradoxes inherent in any social scientific movement. Finally, it is concluded that studies of "borderland" organizations like SPSSI may provide a fruitful point of departure for further studies of science and civil society.

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG: Der Beitrag untersucht die stark vernachlässigte Rolle der Wissenschaften im ‚Projekt Zivilgesellschaft' und skizziert die wissenschaftliche Einflusssphäre vor dem Hintergrund eines minimalistischen Zivilgesellschaftsmodells. Die Bedeutung dieser Sphäre für das ‚Projekt Zivilgesellschaft' insgesamt wird zunächst umrissen und sodann beispielhaft anhand einer Fallstudie über die „Society for the Psychological Study of Social Issues (SPSSI)", einer wissenschaftlichen Organisation an der Grenze zwischen Wissenschaft und der Sphäre bürgerschaftlichen Engagements, vertieft. Die Studie gibt einen Überblick über die Erfolge, die SPSSI bei der Verbreitung von Werten hatte, die heute mit ‚Zivilgesellschaft' verbunden werden, und untersucht dann näher die Herausforderungen, denen diese Aktivitäten von seiten des Staates, des Marktes, der Wissenschaft und der Bereiche zivilgesellschaftlichen Engagements gleichermaßen ausgesetzt waren. Diese Herausforderungen, so wird argumentiert, stellen eine Bedrohung für alle Organisationen dar, die versuchen, zivilgesellschaftliche Werte voranzubringen, so dass diese, anders als SPSSI, gut daran täten, sich auf mögliche Störungen aus jeder dieser Sphären vorzubereiten. Diese Aspekte der für sozialwissenschaftliche Bestrebungen einzigartigen Geschichte von SPSSI können darüber hinaus die Herausforderungen erhellen, denen sich Forscher der Zivilgesellschaft als Sozialwissenschaftler mit einer besonderen sozialen Vision gegenüber sehen. Der ständige Balanceakt von SPSSI zwischen zwei Spannungsverhältnissen – zum einen zwischen Elitismus und demokratischen Werten, zum anderen zwischen wissenschaftlichem Neutralismus und sozialem Engagement – enthüllt die Widersprüche, die jeder sozialwissenschaftlichen Bewegung innewohnen. Daher können Studien über Organisationen „im Grenzgebiet" wie SPSSI, so die Schlussfolgerung, einen fruchtbaren Ausgangspunkt für weitere Forschungen über das Verhältnis von Wissenschaft und Zivilgesellschaft bieten.

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Science and Civil Society: Lessons from an Organization at the Borderland

The vital advent of the historical perspective into the field of civil society research marks a (literally) definitive moment in the field's young history. Comparative and historical studies have largely shifted discussion from normative, idealized conceptions of civil society to real approximations of that concept. These empirical studies, in addition to those re-examinations of the term's intellectual history which have shown it to be far less monochromatic than had been previously assumed, have led civil society researchers to consider anew what, exactly, they claim to study. From the historian's perspective, this re-examination is a critical step for the growth of the civil society project. As Margaret Somers has convincingly described, the vague ahistorical umbrella definition which prevailed in the early years of the concept's modern revival was not only unhelpful to its study, but also did it a disservice by paradoxically naturalizing a normative vision of the sphere (Somers, 1995).

Recent more empirical reformulations have proven more fruitful. These new definitions of civil society may be organized within a tripartite classification (Alexander, 1998; Perez-Diaz, 1998). The first category of definitions, Perez-Diaz's "generalist" school, most closely approximates the prior catch-all conception. Alongside Locke, Scottish Enlightenment thinkers, Rousseau, and Tocqueville, contemporary researchers like Ernest Gellner and Perez-Diaz prefer broad definitions which allow for the study of complex systematic interactions among what others conceive of as separate spheres. The second school takes civil society to refer to all non-governmental space, collapsing the Hegelian market, public, and private spheres. First pessimistically proposed by Marx in the nineteenth century, this perspective has been adopted by researchers across the political spectrum, from the most left-wing statists to ultra-conservative anti-statists. Finally, the "minimalist" position chooses to exclude both economy and state, if not also many other spheres, from its definition. Gramsci, Habermas, Cohen and Arato, and Jeffrey Alexander would all be best placed here. These thinkers focus on associations, public discourse, communications, social movements, peculiar institutions, and shared values of equality, pluralism, and respect as the lifeblood of an independent public sphere called "civil society."

Its analytic specificity makes this last class the most conducive to particular empirical study.[1] To identify a separate sphere is not, as Perez-Diaz has asserted, "to reject such a systematic link among the diverse components of what I [as a generalist] call civil society," nor is it "to see fundamental conflicts

[1] Perez-Diaz has argued otherwise (Perez-Diaz, 1998). I stand with Alexander in his response to Perez-Diaz's claims, as echoed here (Alexander, 1998, p.18).

between economic markets, the state and what they [the minimalists] call civil society" (Perez-Diaz, 1998, 213). Rather, to speak of a delimited realm of public interaction separate from market, state, and, as I will assert, numerous other spheres, is to approach a more exact analysis of the vast range of interactions which generalists would unhelpfully subsume under one catch-all term. If we are to understand how a realm of active, respectful, and equal civic engagement is fostered, we must be able to distinguish it from other, differently-motivated, spheres of interaction.

To that end, I here propose a fourth sphere within the minimalist scheme whose theoretically independent authority can be shown to affect the civil society sphere in a number of ways: the sphere of science. In that proposal, this work stands alongside those of the many empirically-minded researchers today calling for work that will bring more specifity to our delineation of the civil sphere (Kumar, 1993; Ehrenberg, 1999; Trentmann, 2000). As John Ehrenberg writes, "simply understanding it as a nonmarket, nonstate sphere of voluntary public activity is not enough to help us make crucial distinctions between Robert Putnam's bowling leagues, soccer teams, and choral societies on the one hand, and Greenpeace, the National Organization for Women, and the Ku Klux Klan on the other" (Ehrenberg,1999, p. 235-6). Delineating more spheres like science can both reduce and particularize the descriptive load which "civil society" has had to bear.

We can and must also consider each sphere dynamic and fluid, as Perez-Diaz would have it. As this work will show, it is precisely in their interactions that the internal workings of these ever-differing spheres come into focus.[2] Alexander has thus advocated for examination of the civil society realm at its interface with other spheres:

> This kind of civil community can never exist as such, it can only exist 'to one degree or another'. One reason is that it is always interconnected with, and interpenetrated by, other more or less differentiated spheres which have their own criteria of justice and their own system of rewards. There is no reason to privilege any of these non-civil spheres over any other. The economy, the state, religion, science, the family – each differentiated sphere of activity is a defining characteristic of modern and post-modern societies…Rather than try to reduce the contemporary social system to the identity of one of its spheres, I would suggest that we acknowledge social differentiation both as a fact and a

[2] Some recent descriptions of the fleeting, dynamic nature of civil society might well be described as Derridean, challenging any attempt to locate or define a civil society realm. In addressing this definitional tension, the field might benefit from a more explicit use of Derrida in its theorizing, in particular from his proposal that for practical purposes, we can and must speak of concepts (like civil society) as concrete entities even as we recognize their meaning as the product of vacillation.

process and that we study the boundary relationships between its spheres." (Alexander, 1998, pp.7-8).

From a historical, empirical, and minimalist perspective, I propose to study the activities of a civically-minded professional association, the Society for the Psychological Study of Social Issues (SPSSI) poised on the border of the science and civil society spheres. Empowered by science, oriented towards society, this organization's history of failures and successes in fostering civil society provides an instructive window into the interactions of state, market, and civil society with that fourth, and until this point sorely overlooked, sphere: science.

Science and Civil Society

Sorely overlooked, indeed. Shortly I shall have to defend the classification of science as a sphere within this scheme. I am here concerned with the relevance of science, however construed, to the civil society project.

An Implicit Ideological Strain

Rationality and the scientific authority it empowers figure implicitly in most any conception of civil society, real or ideal. Seventeenth and eighteenth century Enlightenment visions of civil society placed a high premium on rational discourse and truth. Reason formed the very lynchpoint of Kant's, Mendelssohn's, and Hegel's civic social visions. If nineteenth century Marxist formulations challenged the alleged rationality of existing civil society, they advocated rational opposition to corrupting market forces in order to restore critical reason to it. Modern formulations are again dependent upon rationality as the foundation of the tolerance and pluralism which hold disparate groups together. In particular, the Habermasian conception focuses on the "reasoned" discourse of networked groups and individuals.[3]

Theorists will thus adamantly defend the concept against allegations of any ideological or teleological strain (Hall, 2000; Trentmann, 2000; Keane, 1998).

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[3] Habermas's 1989 work *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* was criticized for its neglect to explicitly include science in the public sphere. Some have argued that he was implicitly addressing science in his discussion of the rationality that must underlie all civil discussion (Olesko, 2002, p.ix). I return to this issue in the section on "respectful public discourse" below.

Civil society, it is said, is not for any one thing other than that very ability not to be, entirely, for any one thing. Civil society is therefore opposed to fanaticism, as John Hall explains:

> A final clarification should be offered about the notion of living with difference…One element at work is an opposition to the fanatical insistence that there is only one way to the truth. In this sense, civil society has about it a measure of relativism, for it asserts that difference is unavoidable, indeed desirable for those who insist that the ends of life are diverse. But the other side of the picture, stressing the sharing of belief that diversity is acceptable, is quite as important. Relativism is at a discount here, for some differences – most obvious among them, of course, fanaticism and the caging of individuals within social groups – are unacceptable to a civil society (Hall, 2000, 54).

Such tolerance would be impossible without some reflective distance from one's own values. This rational separation between "what I believe" and "what you must believe" is, then, the one and only thing which all definitions of civil society require. Others, of course, may add to this active civic participation (the so-called democratic vision) or any number of values particular to one's understanding of civil society. But all fundamentally depend upon mankind's ability to oppose fanaticism with rationality.

Ironically this anti-ideological stance has critical ideological implications. Those who would argue with the notion that Western rationality is itself a value need only read accounts of attempts to transport civil society to non-Western cultures which either do not share it, or do. In the former case, Westerners must contend with competing value systems, and in so doing recognize rationality as one of many (Keane, 1998; Kaviraj and Khilnani, 2001). In the latter, we face foreign and sometimes conflicting, but equally logical, constructions which challenge the idea of a Western premium on rationality dominant since the Enlightenment. As Jack Goody describes,

> There is a kind of moral evaluation attached to the very concepts of civility, rationality, and enlightenment, qualities that are seen in contributing to the so-called European miracle and that are necessarily unique to the West. That approach makes for an ethnocentric and suspect social science which does little to clarify the analysis of undoubted achievements that took place at that time, but which must be seen in the light not only of those of ancient Greece, but of those of earlier Mesopotamia, of the Arab Middle East, and og Tang and Sung China (Goody, 2001, pp.153).

Whether Western rationality is rejected or met with differing rational schemes, the challenge to its hegemony reveals its status as a *value*.

Science, broadly defined, represents the pinnacle of Western reason.[4] The premium placed on rationality is reflected in the tremendous power accorded to "scientific opinion" in the public, state, and economic spheres. Effective transmission of a single new scientific discovery – of, for example, harmful effects of buried industrial waste - can make the market drop, groups organize, individuals relocate, and politicians restructure budgets and policies.

While research into the interaction of science and civil society has only just begun,[5] the field studying the influence of science upon society more generally is already well-trodden by scientists, historians and philosophers of science, ethicists, sociologists, anthropologists, policy-makers, and others. Civil society

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[4] I leave aside here the question of the difference between reason based in revelation or philosophy and that based in experience (what we today consider science). While a critical distinction for studies focused before or during the Renaissance, certainly from Locke's time on it is appropriate to equate scientific reason with rationality (Cook, 2002). The five main definitions of science offered in the Oxford English Dictionary, 3rd edition, are as follows: "1. a. The state or fact of knowing; knowledge or cognizance *of* something specified or implied...*Philos.* in the sense of 'knowledge' as opposed to 'belief' or 'opinion'. 2. a. Knowledge acquired by study; acquaintance with or mastery of any department of learning...3. a. A particular branch of knowledge or study; a recognized department of learning. 4. a. In a more restricted sense: A branch of study which is concerned either with a connected body of demonstrated truths or with observed facts systematically classified and more or less colligated by being brought under general laws, and which includes trustworthy methods for the discovery of new truth within its own domain…5. a. The kind of knowledge or of intellectual activity of which the various 'sciences' are examples…In mod. use chiefly: The sciences (in sense 4) as distinguished from other departments of learning; scientific doctrine or investigation. Often with defining adj. as in 4b. b. In modern use, often treated as synonymous with 'Natural and Physical Science'..." These various definitions reveal the evolution of our modern understanding of the word from its roots in a premium placed on "'knowledge' as opposed to 'belief,'" but the constraints upon this knowledge are vague. Rather than employing my own more limiting definition of science in this article, I instead use the term as it is wielded by those who claim it: to refer to a branch of study which produces knowledge and truth through various "trustworthy methods for the discovery of truth within its own domain." Definition 4 above most closely captures this sense.

[5] The first two such treatments, to my knowledge, were the 2000 conference in Madison, Wisconsin on "Science and Civil Society" as well as the journal issued in part as a follow-up to that conference, the July 2002 issue of *Osiris*. Other work has been initiated by scientists directly. In particular, international organizations of scientists like the UNESCO-affiliated International Council for Science (http://www.icsu.org) and the EU-affiliated European Research Area (http://www.cordis.lu/rtd2002/era-debate/era.htm) have drafted recent resolutions affirming a commitment to the furtherance of many civil society values, among them the protection of freedoms, social responsibility, transnational tolerance and community, education, and respect for non-Western systems of knowledge. The ERA has even published a contract notice for a study on the "Governance of the European Research Area: The Role of Civil Society." The stated goal of the study is "to further a better understanding of the conditions needed for civil society to play an effective part in the creation of the European research area" (http://dbs.cordis.lu). In their commitments to their larger societies, as well as in the societies they are forming among themselves, modern scientists have begun to think in terms of civil society, and to define the role of science within it.

researchers stand to benefit greatly from the work underway in this field. Philosophers and historians of science, as well as many scientists themselves, have long comfortably recognized “pure science” and the absolute rationality it represents as an idealized construct. These fields have worked to reveal the many irrational forces and motivations involved in the scientific endeavor, deconstructing the ideal in favor of the real as civil society researchers have begun to do for notions of rational discourse and the concept of rationality in general. These disciplines are in large part devoted to exploring these social limits of rationality, as well as its post-Enlightenment social power as the grounds of all knowledge, both of which issues are critical to any understanding of a civic sphere.[6]

Furthermore, the aforementioned questions of the imperialism of Western rationality have long occupied scientists in developing countries, where their introduction of medical, environmental, and other technologies has often been met with open hostility. Such workers have begun to develop more sensitive means of adapting to and integrating local traditions to facilitate the acceptance of their work. The challenges they have faced are analogous to those of social scientists considering the feasibility of a Western sociopolitical model in non-Western countries, and the lessons they have gleaned therefore well worth consideration. Both fields stand to gain from dialogue about these issues.

The Peculiar Position of the Social Sciences

Within the sphere of science, the social sciences occupy a peculiar position. Poised on the border of the humanities and the sciences, these studies investigate human ideas and culture, and are therefore subject to the epistemological consequences of themselves being what they study. As a result of this recursiveness, such sciences are frequently recieved with a harsh skepticism spared the “hard sciences.” The human hand is far more evident in studies *of* it, rather than solely by it. We more freely trust the objectivity of a plasma physicist’s analysis of x-ray lasers than we might a social psychologist’s analysis of group dynamics.

In the face of these challenges, the social sciences must constantly make explicit the scientist’s implicit claim to rationality. Social scientists are not, they assert, simply glorified social commentators but rather have obtained an objective distance from the human experience they study unavailable to non-scientists. The latter therefore cannot make the same claims to rational

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[6] For their part, historians and philosophers of science can benefit from explicit reference to the idea of civil society, a more specific focus for studies of the intersection of science and society (Broman, 2002).

judgment. The social scientist at once affirms the truth of her position as well as the lesser status of so-called common sense knowledge about society (Feyerband, 1978).

I do not mean to imply a malicious intent in this claim to rational distance from human experience. It is critical to the work of social scientists, and so long as it is upheld as an ideal, rather than a reality, can only strengthen the rigor of those endeavors. Indeed, as I discuss below, all professions must justify their jurisdictions in some way (Abbott, 1988). Social scientists derive their authority from their claim to scientific objectivity.

That said, that particular claim to authority has potentially dangerous moral implications. Studies of the early 20th century progressive American social sciences among which SPSSI arose have examined both the liberating and oppressive tendencies of their elitist rationality. At that time, disciplinary societies of the social sciences – then centered around sociology, economics, and psychology - had begun to organize for political, professional, commercial, and social ends (Morawski, 1986; Herman, 1995; Allport, 1954; Franks, 1975). Underpinning these endeavors was the presupposition of "the superiority and necessity of scientific rationality in a troubled and irrational social world" (Morawski, 1986, p.123). This vision included the beliefs that (1) "rational knowledge is scientific knowledge;" (2) "without the rational framework of science, human beings are inevitably and constantly subject to irrational, impulsive, and emotional actions;" and (3) "the attainment of a rational social order depends upon the research of human scientists for it could not emerge from blind tradition, political philosophy, democratic customs, or even social evolution" (Morawski, 1986, 115).

While perhaps Morawski, or the psychologists of the particular era she studied, overstate the case, the scientific elitism implied by their claim to rationality is a fundamental point of tension – and, again, I am not interested in judging that claim – for any normative social science. Purely descriptive social scientists can afford to be less concerned with justifying the authority of their opinions. Those with normative agendas, however, must establish grounds for the *imposition* of their ideas.

But if an elitist rationalist claim is necessary to a normative social science project, where does that leave those who study what they believe to be a fundamentally *rational* society?

This paradox is critical to the civil society project. Like any social scientists, civil society researchers are themselves *a part of* that which they study, obtaining critical distance from it through allegedly objective study. But if the civil society vision is itself rooted in a belief in man's rational capacity, researchers would seem to lack any grounds upon which to base the priority of

their own rational vision. Some, like John Keane, avoid this problem of the normative by insisting that the field is purely descriptive:

> The concept of civil society is today often used as an *idealtyp* to describe, explain, clarify, and understand the contours of a given slice of complex reality. The immediate or avowed aim of such *empirical-analytic interpretations* of civil society is not to recommend courses of political action or to form normative judgments. Rather, the language of civil society is used to develop an explanatory understanding of a complex sociopolitical reality by means of theoretical distinctions, empirical research and informed judgment about its origins, patterns of development and (unintended) consequences…The term is mainly used for observational purposes (Keane, 1998, p.37; emphasis in original).

Whether or not some researchers approach "civil society" as a purely descriptive project, they cannot deny its normative tendencies, or the roots of its modern revival in the reactionary political programs of Eastern Europe and Latin America. As Frank Trentmann describes, this normative tendency has always been present in the pursuit, alongside the descriptive project Keane describes:

Whatever we think of the recent wave of Western agencies and programs promoting civil society, it is important to recognize that this is nothing fundamentally new. From its birth in eighteenth-century Britain, civil society combined a prescriptive and expansionist with an emancipatory momentum. It was a popular *applied science*, informing views about "how society should work" as well as "how society worked" (Trentmann, 2000, p.4; my emphasis).

The paradox of a normative social science of the rational is not, in practice, absolute, but rather points to the delicate relationship of scientist and subject. Those today researching civil society because they wish to see it created – whether in Europe or North America, Asia or Latin America – must walk a fine line between elitism and an accompanying hypocriosy on the one hand; and empowerment and an accompanying lack of authority on the other. How does one impose a judgment when the imposee stands on the same epistemological grounds as the imposer? The civil society project blurs the lines between science and society, between rational study and rational existence.

Here, again, the project would benefit from dialogue with those fields which have long struggled with this question. For if human irrationality was once the grounds and impetus for progressive social scientific authority, many have since become uncomfortable with the pessimism and elitism of that vision. People don't have to be irrational to benefit from scientific guidance. Many social scientists would in fact adopt the opposite position, that man always acts rationally except when influenced to the contrary. But if all (or even most) knowledge is rational, and if all have access to the objects of social scientific

study, what gives the scientist's vision priority over any other? Among other issues, this article will examine the negotiation of this difficult balance between elitism and populism by one scientific organization, the Society for the Psychological Study of Social Issues (SPSSI).[7]

The Borderland: Locating SPSSI

The Scientific Sphere

I touched, above, upon the analytic merits of subdividing society into "spheres of influence" beyond those of state, market, and civil society.[8] Scientific pursuits constitute one such realm. In theory though not practice, scientific authority is a unique and independent force, exerting the power of *knowledge*. Like market and state, science may be influenced by other spheres just as it may influence them, but its power is never reducible to any other. As such, it should be accorded a separate status in the scheme of social influence.

While this status should be placed within the context of discussions of professionalization, scientific authority should not be regarded as a mere artifact of it. Discourse on professionalization has tended to emphasize parallels in its process and organization for a wide range of occupations, thereby obscuring critical distinctions in function, power, and social context. Within such schemes, scientific authority is merely a product of the development of professional norms analogous to those of any other field. However, as both Merton (1973) and Ben-David (1972) have argued, science represents an independent authority of knowledge production that cannot be subsumed under any other source of power. Abbott's (1988) proposed shift of the field's emphasis from the study of common professional social structures to that of systematic jurisdictional

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[7] In the July 2002 issue of *Osiris*, Thomas Broman suggests that two sets of questions with which historians of science should begin to investigate civil society are (1) that centered on voluntary associations engaged with science and (2) that investigating the relationship between science, civil society, and political authority (p.2). This article approaches both questions at once, investigating questions of science and political authority as they were experienced by a particular scientific association.

[8] This is not to say that the list of spheres may be extended indefinitely. While I here propose that the Hegelian scheme of market, power (state), and private spheres ignores other critical independent forces, the opposite extreme of delineating too many such forces, many of which may actually be reduced to one another, must also be avoided. Representing the power of knowledge not accounted for within any of the other classically discussed spheres, science may be clearly and helpfully delineated as an independent sphere of influence.

disputes offers a way of reconciling these two discussions. Within it, science can be understood as, on the one hand, analogous to any other profession in its search for realms of jurisdiction. On the other hand, because professions may justify their jurisdictions in any number of ways, science is distinguished by the particular authority supporting its jurisdiction. For example, religion supports the authority of the clergy, while the state supports that of not only government officials but also judges, lawyers, and law enforcement officials. While modern professional science is far from the autonomous authority early scientific institutions like the Royal Society envisioned, it maintains an independent power within the professional scheme (Merton, 1973, Ben-David, 1972; Gibbons, 1994). And thus while many of the challenges posed to SPSSI's authority may be understood within a very broad scheme of professionalization, this article is more interested in the specific manifestation of those concerns in scientific work, supported by a theoretically autonomous scientific sphere.[9]

Finally, that autonomy need not, as Perez-Diaz argues, imply lack of interaction. This article uses science's *theoretical* independence to situate the activities negotiated by a *real* organization at the boundaries between the scientific, state, market, and civil society – with its power of popular opinion - realms. On the borderland, powers can unite or clash, be co-opted or nullified. If the blurring of these borders is more interesting than their stasis, identification of that blurring is only made possible by the theoretical existence of independent spheres of power.

Locating SPSSI

The focus of this article is the Society for the Psychological Study of Social Issues (SPSSI). Founded as an independent organization of socially concerned psychologists in 1936, it later became a division of the world's largest psychologists' organization, the American Psychological Association (APA). Today its international membership of 3500 consists primarily of American psychologists, largely social psychologists, but also includes scientists and students from other fields and countries. Though smaller in number, this membership is broader in both disciplinary and geographic scope than that of the APA, whose 155,000 members are all American psychologists. In the most general terms, the society seeks to both further and apply research on and

[9] Zuoyue Wang and Thomas Broman have argued for another case in which the conflation of scientific organization and professionalization can sorely obscure the more subtle political issues in play (Broman, 2002, p.18; Z. Wang, 2002). Celia Applegate has further proposed that precisely this area of the intersection of scientific expertise and professionaliztion in civil society remains in sore need of further exploration (Appelgate, 2002, p. 357).

knowledge of psychological aspects of social issues. The particulars of its vision and activities comprise the bulk of this case study so I leave them aside here.

I have chosen this organization as a point of departure for two reasons. First, as will be shown, this organization is peculiarly situated at the intersection of science and society, founded in order to serve the interests of the latter - defined in a manner that correlates to commonly invoked values of "civil society" - using the knowledge of the former. In can thus not only speak to the general plight of an organization committed to civil society (though not necessarily located within it) but also to that of a group specifically committed to the application of its own scientific studies to that end. As discussed above, this situation should be of prime interest to researchers in civil society negotiating many of the same tensions in that position. Second, this organization made a good case study for the practical reason that as a very self-conscious group, it has kept excellent records of its efforts over the course of the twentieth century. My own investigation only touches the brim of a well of studies undertaken by its members in their constant efforts to evaluate SPSSI's past to improve its present. I return to this feature at the end of this article as one of the organization's finest characteristics, not only for my own practical purposes, but also for the attainment of its own goals.

Let us begin by plotting SPSSI on the spatial social map. I have adopted the Hegelian spherical scheme, and proposed four such spheres: science, state, market, and civil society. In deciding where to place SPSSI, we need first assign the grounds for that placement. Are individuals and institutions placed within a sphere based on primary (though not by any means exclusive) affiliation? If so, how is that affiliation defined?

I here approach these questions from the reverse: what is the goal of this placement? For this study, it will be useful to place SPSSI on the social map in order to study the influences of the various spheres – which is to say the interactions of their various powers - upon its efforts to promote something like a civil society. The question of affiliation, then, is one of power and influence. In that vein I will speak of SPSSI as existing within the realm of science, its primary source of power, but at its border with the other three spheres, particularly that of civil society. All of SPSSI's diverse activities and claims to knowledge have been rooted, first and foremost, in its scientific authority. As Ellen Herman has written of the rise of psychological expertise in a variety of forms, "scientific discovery or clinical practice, theoretical understanding or practical application – these represented different forms of the same enterprise, at least as far as the relationship between knowledge and power was concerned" (Herman, 1995, 11). Concerned with the practical application of scientific knowledge, SPSSI should therefore be located in this realm of power.

The question of the society's primary affiliation in the sense not of influence but of responsibility and audience, is far more contentious. Dispute over these more ideological forms of affiliation have marked the society since its inception, revealing the tensions inherent in the borderline position of any such organization deriving its power from one sphere but addressing itself to another. While this dispute has no bearing on which sphere I define, for analytical purposes, as SPSSI's primary source of power, it has everything to do with the means and ends toward which it applies that power. In this sense, we may speak of SPSSI as located within the scientific sphere, but on the border neighboring that of civil society. The themes of this borderland dispute will recur throughout this discussion, but I hear introduce them briefly in the context of an overview of the society's history.

SPSSI In Context: Pure and Applied Science in Early 20th Century America

SPSSI was founded in 1936 among the "later-born" American disciplinary societies of the social sciences – sociology, economics, psychology – which expanded the intellectual jurisdiction of the earlier societies from the purely scientific to the political, moral, and economic. These societies promoted the role of the scientific expert in guiding an allegedly increasingly malfunctioning social world (Morawski, 1986, pp.111-2). A number of works have traced the rise of the social influence of American psychology at this time, from its origins in the progressive societies of the twenties and thirties to its fruition in the now ubiquitous popular psychological language. In 1930, a cultural critic noted astutely, if prematurely, that in popular parlance and judgment, "we've gone psychiatric" (qtd. in Lunbeck, 1994, p.3). By 1995, his hyperbole was fact, and historian Ellen Herman could assert that:

> Psychological insight is the creed of our time. In the name of enlightenment, experts promise help and faith, knowledge and comfort. They devise confident formulas for happy living and ambitious plans for dissolving the knots of conflict. Psychology, according to its boosters, possesses worthwhile answers to our most difficult personal questions and practical solutions for our most intractable social problems…It is taken for granted that [psychological experts] have a right to a central place in debates about the current state and future directions of American society. From families to governments, from abuse and recovery to war and urban violence, from the mysteries of individual subjectivity to the manifest problems of our social life, few institutions, issues, or spheres of existence remain untouched by the progress of psychology in American society (Herman, 1995, p.2).

Psychological ideas were gradually co-opted by other social scientific realms as well. Anthropologists, sociologists, and policy makers got on the psychological bandwagon "under the banners of 'culture and personality,' 'behavioral science,' and 'community mental health'' (Herman, 1995, p.4). Civil society research has not been immune to this influence. Contemporary researchers explain have described the fostering of civility through "changes in political psychology" (Hall, 2000, p.52); or the "[transmutation of] political categories into psychological categories" (Sennett, 1978, p.259); or again the confrontation of the psychological consequences of socially frustrated violent impulse (Elias, 1994). Indeed, the now invisible hand of psychology will inevitably play an enormous role in shaping any modern social vision.

The anti-psychiatry movement of the 1970s read in this onset a malicious and deliberate expansion of scientific control. Such thinkers warned that psychologists had invaded private and public spaces, from schools to the Senate, gradually extending the bounds of its therapeutic purview to include all. More recent treatments provide a more balanced view of the process, emphasizing that the psychologizing trend, like any historical trend, results from a very long and complex social shift rather than the conspiring efforts of a group of nepharious psychologists (Lunbeck, 1994; Herman, 1995). I am here interested in this trend as the backdrop for the efforts of SPSSI, which had a particular role within it. But the larger question of the implications of the psychologizing of society for the civil society endeavor is well worthy of treatment, particularly as modern descriptions of it increasingly emphasize psychological factors.[10]

Until World War II, when the American government heavily recruited psychologists as political advisors, the influence of American psychology was limited to non-governmental professional, academic, and some public arenas. As numbers of psychologists and professions requiring psychological training grew, psychological associations began to multiply. Scientifically-oriented organizations of psychologists had first arisen the nineteenth century, but as specialties differentiated, so did associations. The result was a plethora of scientific groups - many with the same polysemous acronym: the American Psychological Association, the American Psychiatric Association, and the American Psychoanalytic Association were a few of the earliest examples. In our own century, with the beginnings of the proliferation of psychological professions and practitioners, new groups began to form to address social and political concerns. This trajectory forshortens and recapitulates the evolution of social associations more generally, as described by Frank Trentmann, from their beginnings as learned societies to those "propelled by improvement,

[10] For example, from the normative side, how will non-Western societies receive visions based in Western psychology? And from the descriptive side, how is psychological theory used in influencing public discourse? By whom?

philanthropy, and public welfare" (Trentmann, 2000, p.13). This may perhaps point to a fundamental progression in the focus of social organizations of any one type, from those oriented toward the group's more narrowly-defined needs and goals to those concerned with the group's interactions with its surrounding society.

The transition between these two stages was marked, for psychology, by heated scientific debate about the tainting of scientific psychology with social concerns. As Ellen Herman has written, "not all experts agreed that psychology had a special responsibility to grease the wheels of society…In psychology, there were those who drew a sharp line between science and society, kept faith with the laboratory as the only legitimate site for the reproduction and verification of new knowledge, and viewed colleagues who testified before Congress and spoke out on public issues as alarming proof that many psychologists were prone to confusing personal politics and professional responsibilities" (Herman, 1995, p.8). Such debate exploded in the wake of World War II, as more and more psychologists became politically-active or employed.[11] Famed psychologist B.F. Skinner, as well as Harvard Professor Edwin G. Boring were among the more vocal dissenters, advocating the strict separation of scientific and the social. Playing to such nay-sayers, 1948 candidate for the presidency of the American Psyciatric Association C.C. Burlingame ran on platform that he would "uphold the traditions of the association as a scientific medical group and not one that is trying to tell everyone else how to live" (qtd. in Herman, 1995, p.9).

Discussions of the propriety of interaction between the scientific and social realms have perpetuated throughout this century. In her account of the rise of socially-oriented organizations of psychologists, Jill Morawski has problematized the traditionally strict division between pure and applied scientific concerns. "There is clear evidence throughout the sciences that the distinctions between 'pure' science and 'socially responsible' science are problematic and are in need of reconceptualization; psychology is no exception. Such demarcations between scientific activities are only tenable with the acceptance of a naïve theory of knowledge: organizational distinctions are assumer to be direct mirrors of *real* distinctions in the knowledge (and reality) itself" (1986, p.113). Because all scientific knowledge is a human product, "pure" science only exists as an ideal. To Morawski's mind, this ideal has sorely impeded the

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[11] Jessica Wang has described a parallel development among physical scientists, largely isolated from social action until they became politically integrated during World War II, and concerned about nuclear power. While she takes as her starting point John Dewey's 1927 articulation of this conflict between the scientific and the social , she argues that the conflict could not come to fruition until after scientists had been politically empowered by World War II (J. Wang, 2002). While this article agrees that the war was a critical turning point for the philosophy and outlook of SPSSI, it discusses evidence of this conflict in the organizations words and actions well before the post-war era.

work of self-proclaimed activist scientists, whose political influences are more apparent but no more fundamentally *present* than those of "pure" scientists.

Morawski has revealed the falsity of this theoretical dichotomy still upheld today through an empirical analysis of American psychological organizations in the 1920's and 1930's. As she concludes in that study:

> The professional associations to which psychologists became attached between the two world wars belied the distinction between 'pure' and 'applied' activities. They contradicted the division of labor presupposed in labeling activites as either scientific, professional, activist, or commercial. At the root of this blurring was a particular conception of the social world and its possibilities. This world view portrayed ignorant beings entangled in a complex, irrationally governed society; scientific experts represented both the external observers of this reality and the invisible hand capable of remedying the largely psychological problems. Science and organized groups of scientists stood as a means of rational control (Morawski, 1986, 119).

Not only could applied science be undertaken by such groups in a "pure," way, pure science was in an important sense itself inherently applied. By representing the possibility of rational observation, pure science enabled the applied and in so doing was itself, by definition, applied.

As we will see, SPSSI's history bears out Morawski's assertion of the blurred lines between the pure and the applied, the scientific and the social. All members of SPSSI believed that science had something to offer society. But impetus for and means of that action were far more contentious.

SPSSI in Action: Why and How?

From its inception, SPSSI vacillated constantly, and often consciously, between the scientific and social. Even while pushing the boundaries of the "applied," SPSSI has tried to maintain strict scientific standards. And even as it has struggled to influence the public sphere, such influence has seemed to undermine the scientific authority in which it was rooted. The result has been two different lines of tension within the organization about what I will call the "why" and the "how" of its work. These tensions will weave in and out of our discussion of SPSSI's activities.

The former tension, as to the driving force behind SPSSI's work, relates to the scientific debate discussed above between the pure and the applied. Some SPSSI members have viewed their work as directed first and foremost by science, guided by the idea that only research undertaken from a value-neutral

perspective can yield true and therefore useful results. For this school, purity of research enables application. Its opposers, like Morawski, would dispute the possibility of value-neutral science, and argue instead for value-driven science. Social need, as defined by the scientist, thus dictates the work he should undertake. This debate differs from the pure vs. applied debates discussed above in that both sides are in favor of applying the results they discover. The question, rather, is the source of the impetus for undertaking the research in the first place.

The latter tension relates to how SPSSI should act upon the information it gleans. Conservative voices have argued for a top-down reform guided by scientific experts with knowledge and also, for some, by political or monied parties with power. In contrast, the more liberal radical members have called for grass-roots action. Between scientific neutrality and value-driven research; between elitism and populism, SPSSI has walked a rugged line.

Both of these tensions plagued SPSSI's founders even before the society existed. SPSSI's first president, Goodwin Watson, originally left the clergy to become a psychologist because he saw in that latter profession as a more effective way to "change the world" and build a "new, more humane society." By the 1930s, Watson had grown frustrated with the isolation and impracticality of academic psychology, as well as its apparent apathy in the face of the country's rapidly deteriorating economic conditions. In the wake of the Great Depression, Watson called upon his colleagues, particularly those in the field of social psychology, to use their knowledge to lead the way to social change. As Ian Nicholson describes in his biography of Watson, "instead of regarding themselves as dispassionate observers of objective truth, Watson urged his colleagues to regard themselves as politically committed activists" (Nicholson, 1997, 40). Firmly planted on the side of valued and active science, Watson opposed the passive, neutral science of his day.

At a 1934 meeting of the American Psychological Association – until then primarily a professional and scientific organization - Watson first proposed the promotion of a social psychology that could facilitate relief efforts, adult education, community organization, and labor struggles, among other activities. In September of 1936, after circulating a proposal to the 700 youngest members of the society, Watson and a group of co-founders led a meeting for the hundreds interested. SPSSI was founded as an independent organization of young, mostly social psychologists, under a petition announcing that it would "work effectively for both the immediate and ultimate freedom of psychology to do its utmost to make contemporary American society intelligible to its members, and to suggest and test hypotheses regarding social change" (qtd in Nicholson, 1997, p.41). Already in this earliest statement, the tension of the "why," between value-driven social commitment and pure scientific study, is clearly visible. The "how" is left more ambiguous.

Likewise, the circular sent out to all APA members following this meeting emphasized both social and the scientific starting points, calling for the support of any psychologist "who believes that realistic research in social psychology should be encouraged and that the scientific study of human behavior might render greater service than it has in the past to wise statesmanship" (Krech and Cartwright, 1956, p.471). The latter phrase alludes to the tension in the "how" of SPSSI's work, in this case reflecting more elitist and conservative tendencies.

The tension between social and scientific orientations has been reflected in more explicit disputes throughout SPSSI's history. At first, Watson and his colleagues had called for the abandonment of value-neutrality and the championing of social goals (Nicholson, 1997). Then, too, SPSSI's first publication, *Industrial Conflict: A Psychological Interpretation* (1936) professed not only a socialist platform – the dominant politics among SPSSI members at the time – but also a strident critique of liberal social science as well as of the very possibility of an objective science (Finison 1986; Nicholson,1997). But the organization's growth to include more conservative psychologists over time frustrated such radical efforts, gradually shifting the focus to socially-oriented but allegedly value-neutral research. As Benjamin Harris, former chair of SPSSI's History Task Force, has written, "for every early SPSSI leader who rejected positivism as elitist and reactionary, there was another who hoped to build social psychology into a positivist science for judging political values and determining the direction for social change" (Harris, 1986, p.10).

Alongside the debate over the "why" lay that over the "how:" whether SPSSI was a populist or an elitist organization.[12] Was social change to be effected by enlightened scientists? Or did scientists stand level with the average citizen in promoting progress? As Harris asserts, "most relevant to an understanding of SPSSI's complicated politics is [its] combination of a populist view of social change with an elitist notion of the role of the social scientist" (Harris, 1986, p.12). Those committed to a more conservative scientific viewpoint were often, but not always, those advocating SPSSI's role as a group of leading experts. Likewise, those in favor of more socially active agenda were more often the populists, though there were exceptions here, too. In the words of former society president Medick, "it is not whether psychology (i.e., SPSSI) should address significant social problems and attempt to solve them. It is the question of how to do it that baffles." From the pure to the applied, the elitist to the populist, SPSSI's history has been marked by continual debate over its philosophical and political orientation.

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[12] In SPSSI's early years, this controversy paralleled that over the ideas of John Dewey, who argued in the late 1920's and early 1930's that while science seemed to be becoming more and more removed from public life, scientists could alter that trend and use science to encourage democracy and openness in public life (Jessica Wang, 2002).

All of the various positions have stood united, however, in certain fundamental values and goals. It is these shared commitments that have held the society together for more that 75 years, and which justify its present characterization as an organization promoting many values which we today associate with civil society. Such values include a commitment to public education; to the social inclusion of marginalized groups; to the defense of civil liberties; to connecting the individual to the group; and to respectful social discourse. I will examine its successes in each of these realms below.

But the society was not always successful in promoting its social vision. Perhaps more often than not, its efforts were frustrated by various forces: state, market, civic, or, indeed, by science itself. Almost all longitudinal examinations of SPSSI's history, including that written only twenty years after its founding by two of its earliest members (Krech and Cartwright, 1956), trace a downward trend in social activism and an upward trend in reformist scientific activity. SPSSI, most conclude, has become an organization dedicated to reform led by experts rather than to grass-roots social change by informed citizens. While this trend is in part attributable to the changing politics of SPSSI's membership, such shifting politics may themselves be traced to more fundamental challenges to SPSSI's social activism. These challenges should be of critical interest to the civil society endeavor, for they represent impediments to the cultivation of a society of socially-active institutions. The second part of this article will trace some exemplary challenges posed to SPSSI's efforts from each realm – state, market, civil society, and science itself – in order to more precisely illuminate such obstacles.

To identify SPSSI's shift toward reformism is not to deride all that it continues to achieve. This article rather uses SPSSI as a case study of an organization dedicated to furthering values central to a civil society, but entangled in the paradoxes inherent in the position of a socially-engaged organization empowered by an autonomous scientific sphere. This paper will first examine SPSSI's successes in advancing values associated with contemporary notions of civil society, and will then survey the challenges presented to its work by the other social spheres. Internal tensions about the how and the why of SPSSI recur throughout the study. Perhaps the greatest lesson to be drawn from SPSSI's history about the maintenance of an organization committed to civil society is the need for the constant reevaluation by its members of the organization's trends. SPSSI's own members have been among its harshest critics; precisely that critical stance has kept it afloat amidst the rough waves of attack presented by other social spheres. I return to this point below.

Exemplary Interventions

Even its toughest critics allow that SPSSI has had some remarkable successes in its efforts to effect social change. This section surveys SPSSI's expressed commitment to and successful activities in five areas congenial to modern conceptions of civil society: 1) the inclusion of marginalized groups; 2) engagement in respectful public discourse; 3) public education; 4) connecting the individual to the group; and 4) the defense of individual civil liberties. Its goals are twofold: first, to legitimate SPSSI's categorization as an association committed to the values of civil society in *both* its actions and its expressed intentions; and second, to study its more successful interventions in the civil society realm.

Inclusion of Marginalized Groups

Recent characterizations of civil society have emphasized the importance of both social inclusion as a positive value and exclusion as a negative value. The "liberal" vision of civil society, focused on the protection of individual freedoms, emphasizes equality of rights and opportunities of all tolerant members of society, regardless of race, religion, or any other dividing factor. The only limit to such inclusion is intolerance, a position which automatically precludes an individual from respectful social participation. On the other hand, the "democratic" vision of social society requires active engagement by all members. To that end, inclusion of different viewpoints is a positive value, a pre-requisite for a thriving social space. As John Hall has stated in his evaluation of the failure of civil society in the ideologically homogenous soviet bloc, "social diversity is a necessary condition for civil society" (Hall, 2000, p.52). In the former Soviet Union, social atomism was so strong that "now there are often no groups able to represent interests, thereby ruling out of bounds the very notion of social bargaining on which the consolidation of democracy depends" (Hall, 2000, p.53). Frank Trentmann has likewise argued for the critical importance of social inclusion in the formation of civil society, calling for a critical examination of the ways in which "civil" institutions like exclusive groups have themselves been the perpetrators of intolerance (Trentmann, 2000).

Foucault and others of the anti-psychiatry school have long charged that psychology has been responsible for the systematic exclusion of certain voices from the social space, justifying such exclusion on scientific grounds. Homosexuals, aggressive women, and people of many races and religion have all been accused at various points in the history of psychiatry of mental illness or impairment, and on those grounds banished from active social participation. Commitment to an asylum served as a means of literally banishing undesirables

from society and coercing acceptance of certain norms of social behavior. Even those whom all might agree are mentally disturbed are said to have been excluded by the stigma of a psychologist's diagnosis. Though these claims are severely overdrawn and maliciously painted, there is a good deal of truth to its most basic historical claim. Intentionally or not – if one can even speak of intent in this anachronistic retrospective manner - psychologists have been partially responsible for the social marginalization of all of these groups.

In light of this claim, SPSSI's efforts toward social inclusion are all the more remarkable. As SPSSI member Dorris Miller has asserted, "the quintessential difference between SPSSI and other psychological organizations at the time [of its founding] was one of orientation: the elitist orientation of the other organizations served to screen populations *out* of opportunity; SPSSI's orientation sought to screen people *in*" (Miller, 1986, p.128; emphasis in original). Initially, these efforts were directed at the poor, as SPSSI led efforts to organize indigent "underclass" workers into labor unions in the wake of the Great Depression (Nicholson, 1997). By 1938 the inclusive scope had broadened, and SPSSI passed its first bigotry-oriented resolution protesting racial psychology (Mednick, 1984, p.164). That same year, SPSSI members spoke up on behalf of their fellow psychologists who would be excluded from the Twelfth Annual International Congress were it to be held in Vienna, as proposed. Austria had just been annexed by the Nazis, and so Jewish psychologists would not be allowed to attend. SPSSI members passed a resolution protesting the Congress's change of location. Its stance eventually convinced its larger, more powerful parent organization, the APA, to pass a similar resolution (Krech and Cartwright, 1956, p.42; Mednick, 1984, p.164).

From World War II until today, SPSSI has championed the causes of civil rights, feminism, and the rights of homosexuals. These efforts took place at the state, civil society and internal levels. At the state level, SPSSI members prepared the social scientists' brief used in *Brown vs Board of Education,* the seminal 1954 Supreme Court trial that outlawed segregation in American schools. At the civil society level, SPSSI issued its own public statements condemning desegregation and race differences, and supported research on both.[13] For example, in 1955 the society gave out several $1000 awards for research on desegregation. It later similarly supported the women's movement and research on gender differences. Internally, SPSSI sought to support the expansion of psychology's professional ranks to include women, Native Americans, Asian-Americans, and gays through grants to groups of each as well as public support for their efforts (Capshew and Laszlo, 1986; Mednick,

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[13] The latter research-oriented efforts reflected a larger move within psychology to examine such questions as the psychological sources of stereotyping and exclusion. Demonized by the antipsychiatry movement, psychology began to prove itself a more complexly oriented field than its critics asserted (Herman, 1995, p.6).

1984).[14] From the legal to the social to the professional arenas, SPSSI actively promoted, and continues to promote, the inclusion and equality of socially marginalized groups.

Respectful Public Discourse

Habermas and others have described respectful public discourse as the lifeblood of civil society. Such discourse involves a reciprocal exchange, dependent upon the mutual recognition of the rights and intelligence of the other. Most interactions of scientists with society are therefore not discourse, but education, which has its own role in the civil society scheme, addressed below. I here examine SPSSI's commitment not to education but to respectful exchange.

As we have seen, tensions between SPSSI's populist and elitist orientations have been an integral part of the society since its inception. The history of psychology as a whole has been split between demonizations of psychologist's authoritarian manipulation of society and idealizations of their liberating treatment of the mad as equals. Only recently have historians begun to challenge both approaches in favor of a more nuanced middle ground. As Ellen Herman has written in this vein, "some of the [20th c psychological experts] treated society as a sick patient in need of cure. Others treated individuals, seeking to induce personal adjustment and growth…but all were involved in forms of human management that made the difference between unethical manipulation and enlightened facilitation appear vague – that is, when the difference was noticed at all" (Herman, 1995, 12). There are no obvious good guys or bad guys in this post-Manichean approach to the history of psychology.

Given this very slippery distinction between manipulation and facilitation, however, we may still distinguish among the attitudes brought to any particular interaction by individual psychologists. Some have praised SPSSI's founders for their remarkable respect for the laity, apparent in the language used in their earliest memos and letters. "At its inception, SPSSI could be differentiated from other psychological organization[s] on the basis of its intended audience," Morawski has written. "Some early members described their audiences not in terms of a naïve or helpless laity but as potential peers in a mission of enacting social change" (Morawski, 1986, p.120; Miller, 1986). These SPSSI scientists saw themselves as partners with citizens in a common mission: the desire for healthy social existence.

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[14] As per de Toqueville, SPSSI thus served as a training ground for the application of values its members advocated for society as a whole. I return to this idea at the end of the article.

This attitude of partnership on the part of some SPSSI members is further manifested in their respect for knowledge systems *other than the scientific*. The scientist brought his own expertise to the table, not to dictate action but to exchange ideas in a democratic fashion. As Morawski has found, "early SPSSI documents also contain some criticisms of the empowered stance of scientism that placed scientific rationality above other knowledge systems, including democracy, and the scientist's observations above the nonscientists…[Its research] implied *respect* for the knowledge of ordinary beings and belief that this knowledge was corrective, enhancing, and necessary" (Morawski, 1986, p.122; emphasis in original). In one early edition of the society's journal, the editor asks for feedback from teachers on a classroom curriculum published in a prior edition. This sort of give and take, a democratic exchange as opposed to an authoritarian dictation, is precisely in line with the Habermasian model of civil society.[15]

It is, however, anathema to many scientists, for whom scientific authority is autocratic. Western science (including that of civil society) places an exclusive premium on objective, rational study. Within it, one cannot simply vote on truth. And thus, as we have seen, many - if not most - in SPSSI professed more elitist positions with respect to their intended audiences. Watson himself "repeatedly maintained that the public was unable to perceive the reality of the social situation." Only social scientists and some enlightened individuals could do that. The psychologist's role was to "instruct the general public as to where their real interests lay" (Nicholson, 1997, p.55). Watson advocated a socially-active science, but not a democratic one. Another founder of SPSSI expressed this position, which he shared, in a magazine interview as the need for psychology to "save a nation from moral, economic, and cultural disaster [through] a scientific reexamination of fundamental principles and concepts of the social order" (Van de Water, 1936; qtd in Harris, 1986, 11).

But even when dominant within the organization, these top-down visions neither negate nor invalidate the coexisting strain of respect for the laity noted by Morawski and others, sometimes coexisting within the same individual. Rather, SPSSI's elitism must be understood in its historical context. As society historian Harris has written, "To say that SPSSI was dedicated to the cause of reformism guided by experts is not to disparage SPSSI or to trivialize its past. Rather it is to identify SPSSI's reformism as part of an ideology of social

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[15] One might object that I only consider one half of this discursive equation, not asking whether the laity to whom SPSSI scientists speak share their respectful approach. My apparent elitist assumption that non-scientists will always respect scientific opinion is rather an artifact of ignorance: I have no comprehensive information on the range of attitudes with which SPSSI's work has been received. Later I consider challenges posed to its efforts by non-scientists on an incidental basis that might be takent to indicate a lack of respect. I am here concerned specifically with the intentions and attitudes of SPSSI itself in establishing the legitimacy of its classification as an organization dedicated to advancing civil society.

science that dominated United States political and social thought beginning in the 1920s, and that gave SPSSI its qualities of radicalism and conservatism, activism and scientism, populism and elitism" (Harris, 1986, p.11). In this context, expert-led reform was the dominant progressive vision. Unusual was not such elitism, but, rather, the respect for citizens which has coexisted with it in SPSSI's philosophy since its founding. As Herman notes, "distinctions between democratic and anti-democratic uses of knowledge have changed over time; the line separating them has a great deal more to do with the social context of ideas than with factors intrinsic to knowledge production" (Herman, 1995, p.11). If much of SPSSI's early work appears, today, undemocratic in practice, the presence of ideas which do conform to modern notions of democracy and exchange is all the more remarkable for it.

The paradox of the normative social science of the rational is inescapable. Even the most liberal scientists bring a confidence in their own methods to the table, else they would not be there to begin with. The question is, rather, what do they expect to take anything *away* from the table in return?

Public Education

Education has been considered one of the core values of civil society ever since its formulation during the Enlightenment. Kant, Mendelssohn, de Toqueville, Hegel – all emphasized knowledge as a prerequisite for fruitful, reasoned civic discourse. For Enlightenment thinkers, state protection of individual rights, liberties and security would allow for the emergence of a new social reality in which, in the words of historian Jurgen Kocka, "work, achievement, and success – not birth and privilege – should determine the distribution of wealth, status, and power. Education should be of the utmost importance. The public use of reason should replace legitimation by tradition" (Kocka, 1997, pp.499).

The Marxist disillusionment with this vision saw in society not reason but coercion. Education was merely one means of that coercion. Gramsci, Horkheimer, Adorno, and Marcuse all bemoaned the society's deterioration into a mass fooled into thinking that the actions it undertook in the name of state and market were in fact products of its own volition (Gramsci, 1971; Horkheimer and Adorno, 1995; Marcuse, 1966). Horkheimer and Adorno denounced rationality in modern society as instrumental, a means of forwarding capitalism rather than of inspiring individual reflection. Such reason in fact *inhibits* individuals from making their own judgments (Horkheimer and Adorno, 1995). Herbert Marcuse similarly charged that technological rationality, the rationality of the technological market and culture, has become political rationality. Thought, reason, speech, and civil liberties – the prized possessions of civil society - are therefore used to support, and not to challenge, the existing order. Education

likewise only exists to further that order. For Marcuse, not truth but exchange value is the object of dispute in the social arena (Marcuse, 1995).

But just as people can be "educated" – in the sense of trained - to use false reason, so, too, can education point the way to more active and critical civic engagement. While Horkheimer and Adorno articulated this hope long ago, Habermas is today the most prominent spokesman for the call for the return of educated, reasoned, critical discourse. We have seen already that respect is one pre-requisite for this discourse. Education is another. Habermas has described the original evolution of a realm of reasoned discourse as a result of the sharing of knowledge and information amongst a reading public (Habermas, 1989, p.367; Habermas, 1996). But the critical, rational nature of that discourse was lost over time as class concerns came to the fore, monopolizing knowledge exchange. Habermas has today called for a return to that society of shared knowledge and reasoned discourse which can maintain the necessary critical distance from market concerns. Habermas' is an optimistic vision – a naïve one, according to his critics - grounded in a deep faith in the power of accurately informed human reason to prevail over other forces.

The founders of SPSSI shared his optimism, and like Habermas recognized the critical link between reasoned discussion and the sharing of knowledge. Fully one half of its original mission statement was directed at public education, and retains equal treatment in the society's current mission statement:

> [SPSSI seeks to promote]…a psychology to do its utmost to make contemporary American society intelligible to its members (1936; qtd in Morawski, 1986 and Nicholson, 1997).
>
> This Society…shall engage in activities to instruct the public on subjects useful to the individual and beneficial to the community (1) by obtaining, and disseminating to the public factual data regarding social change and other social processes through the promotion and encouragement of psychological research on significant theoretical and practical questions of social life… (2002, wwww.spssi.org).

The society's original rhetoric about education was even couched largely in the Marxist terms proposed by Adorno and Horkheimer, subsumed under what Nicholson calls conscientization, or "the effort to enlighten men about the obstacles preventing them from a clear perception of reality [including] cultural myths which confuse people's awareness" (Nicholson, 1997, p.41). For Watson and others of his ilk, the cultural myth from which the public had to be freed was capitalism, unjust and exploitative. Psychologists must, Watson felt, "help the average citizen see through the efforts to misconstrue our economic and political predicament" and thereby precipitate social change (Watson; qtd in Nicholson, 1997, pp.41-2). Today no such Marxist emphasis remains in

SPSSI's efforts, but the tradition has left its mark in the rhetoric of consciousness-raising and public awareness (Capshew, 1986, p.101).

While public education in the abstract has never been a point of controversy within SPSSI, the best means of attaining it has. In the society's earliest days, it drew upon standard academic forms of publication – books, journals, pamphlets, press releases – to convey knowledge and information. Of course, such publications generally remained removed from the public at whom they were directed. A slightly later approached centered upon the publication of materials that would directly affect education. For example, in the 1950s the society prepared two books worth of supplementary readings for the standard college psychology course, one on current research in social psychology and the other on propaganda and public opinion, a hot topic in Cold War America (Krech and Cartwright, 1956, p.472). Sometimes, outside agencies would approach SPSSI in search of social psychology materials that could illuminate their efforts. For example, in response to the request of a group of "action agencies," and funded by UNESCO, ADL, and National Conference of Christians and Jews, SPSSI prepared the two-volume *Research Methods in Social Relations*.

Such publications continued throughout the century, and today the society continues to publish the *Journal of Social Issues*, books, its newsletter, pamphlets and a new electronic journal. The latter three have today been made even more accessible through the rise of the internet, allowing the casual surfer to pause for a few moments of education about such topics as the psychology of terrorism. Some of SPSSI's critics charge that it lacks a true agenda today. Whether or not that is the case, it has certainly continued in its agenda of helping others pursue *their* social goals. The latest pamphlet on the site, "Principles for Promoting Social Change," attests not merely to SPSSI's commitment to attain its ends in a means congenial to civil society, but also to its commitment toward the promotion of that society in and of itself. The pamphlet describes, for any interested, the social psychological principles that might be of use to anyone hoping to further a social cause (http://www.spssi.org/ppsc.html). Its authors offer a "four-step model" for effecting social change, assuring their readers that:

> The principles discussed can be a powerful tool to help promote your cause, be it the guiding ideas for a letter to the editor or an entire campaign effort. The cause you support is worthy of the public's attention, but gaining that attention, let alone eliciting active participation, is not always a smooth task. It is an important task, however, and this booklet provides a guide to help make that task easier. Following the four-step method and using the principles discussed can be effective in influencing social change and making the world a better place to live (http://www.spssi.org/ppsc.html).

As this guide to social activism reveals, the society is committed not only to educating the public about its own studies, but also to directing the studies themselves toward furthering an active discursive realm.

While the internet technology employed by SPSSI today is new, the philosophy behind its use is not. SPSSI has long sought ways to educate the public directly and not through any political or mass media intermediary. John Keane has analyzed the public sphere into three sub-spheres: the micro-public sphere, in which hundreds to thousands interact at a sub-state level; the meso-public sphere, in which millions interact as a nation, and the macro-public sphere, in which millions or billions interact at the global international level, with mass media playing a role at every step (Keane, 1998, p.182). SPSSI's efforts have always occurred at the micro-public level, if not the micro-micro public level, in face-to-face groups of tens and twenties. As society historian Harris describes, its presentation at the 1939 world's fair showed that "SPSSI not only felt compelled to educate the public about the evils of war, facism, and monopoly capitalism, but to do so directly rather than by using the allegedly reactionary mass media" (Harris, 1986, 9). Writing classroom curricula, publishing textbooks, planning public presentations, and, today, making literature available online are just a few of the ways in which the society has sought to *directly* educate the public about psychology's socially relevant findings.

Has it worked? Twenty years after the society's founding Krech and Cartwright evaluated the success of its educational program. "Today, many more people have heard of social psychology, and many practical men believe that it can contribute to the solution of problems; but at the same time we note a general decrease since the 30's in social tolerance of concern with really controversial issues. SPSSI still has something to do" (Krech and Cartwright, 1956, p.472). In 2002, the importance and relevance of psychological findings is beyond dispute. Schools, agencies, and policy-makers alike consult psychologists at every critical step. Public discourse is if anything so infused with psychological language that it is beyond notice. But, as Krech and Cartwright noted in 1956, and as their followers echo to this day, "SPSSI still has something to do." Indeed, education is an unending project. Psychology has not unseated what Horkheimer and Adorno would call passive or instrumental reason. In many cases, in fact, education is invoked in its name. At any given point, educational "success" can only be measured by comparison to that of some prior period, as well as by the level of continued commitment to the educational project. SPSSI's educational activity relative to earlier periods is harder to determine. Has an increasingly conservative political agenda induced a more conservative educational approach? Or is the society as educationally active as ever, just toward less radical ends? While these remain open questions within the society itself, the continuity of that debate indicates its persistent commitment to the value of education.

The Individual and the Group

As an organization of mostly social psychologists, SPSSI has, as we have seen, long been dedicated to the researching and application of ideas about groups, not individuals. It might be expected that this occurs to the exclusion of work on individual psychology, and to some extent this has been the case. However, in its efforts to promote a free and liberal society, SPSSI has throughout its history been attuned to the potential for the violation of the rights of the individual by the group, as explained in the civil liberties section below; to the individual's inclusion by the group, as discussed in that section above; and to the individual's ability to shape his own group, as evidenced by such empowering publications and educational efforts as the "Principles for Promoting Social Change" pamphlet mentioned earlier. This section will not review these various manifestations of SPSSI's concern for the individual, as they are detailed elsewhere it other capacities. It seeks, rather, to highlight an element common to each – concern for the place of the individual within the group - and to relate that element to larger debates within the fields of both civil society and psychology.

The balance between the group and the individual, not merely in terms of liberty but also in terms of identity, is critical to contemporary discussions of civil society in light of the critiques offered by Richard Sennett. Sennett has argued that today's society is too concerned with the self to care for the social, resulting in an "ideology of intimacy: social relationships of all kinds are real, believable, and authentic the closer they approach the inner psychological concerns of each person. This ideology transmutes political categories into psychological categories" (Sennett, 1978. p 259). The result of this transmution, in Sennett's estimation, has been an apathy toward social relationships.

Herman has echoed this critique in her assessment of modern American society as increasingly self-isolating. "Many people have willingly severed the self from its social ecology," she writes. "Feelings of powerlessness against those conditions that shape the self – from mind-numbing corporate depersonalization to the violence ever-present on city streets – have nurtured forms of vehement individualism and elicited desperate hopes that the self can be nurtured and managed at a social distance, out of harm's way."

The resulting aversion to the group is obviously disastrous for any vision of civil society which relies upon association and social networks. The rise of a psychological culture has been blamed for this increasing isolation, but that claim takes a very narrow view of psychological theory. As Herman points out, "the fundamental knowledge that no self exists, except in relation to others and in the context of social reality, survives at the very heart of psychological knowledge itself" (Herman, 1995, p.2). Social psychologists like those who created and still support SPSSI are particularly attuned to this relationship, and

to the fundamental sociality of all human existence. Herman notes this nuance in her evaluation of the the rise of psychological experts and their contribution to the current self-oriented culture:

> The public consequences of psychological expertise during [the twentieth century] were characteristically mixed and contradictory – sometimes repressive and deserving of condemnation, sometimes inspiring people to move boldly in pursuit of personal freedom and social justice. The popularization of psychological vocabulary and the public appearance of a language of subjectivity do not necessarily prove the seamlessness of elite domination or the existence of a tidal wave of false consciousness that blocks progressive change by simultaneously corroding the self and making it the subject of almost obsessive attention. Inclinations toward personal growth, self esteem, and pleasure can form the basis for new concepts of community and collective action even as they rationalize isolated programs of individual self-improvement (Herman, 1995, p.16).

A direct correlation cannot be drawn, then, between professional psychology and the interiorization of society. If socially-active psychologists have employed terminology and ideas that explain the relationship of the individual to the group, they have not *reduced* the former to the latter. One of Herman's central conclusions, in fact, is that "psychological experts have been a critical force in the recent convergence between private and public domains, cultural and political concerns. Joining the comprehension and change of self to the comprehension and change of society was their most enduring legacy" (Herman, 1995, 12).

This union is critical to the civil society project. While civil and state organizations can work to safeguard the individual's rights from violation by a group, they cannot force an individual to actively associate with others as the civil society models require. Many of the models which rely on group interactions have therefore been critiqued as offering an inadequate explanation of the cause for association. Through their research and educational work on the inherent connections between the self and society, active social psychologists like those in SPSSI have promoted a message of affiliation, not isolation.

Defense of Civil Liberties

But SPSSI members have been attuned to the opposite danger as well: that of such total affiliation that individual's rights stand vulnerable to violation by the group. SPSSI has long defended civil liberties against such violation, and is known within the psychological community for that work. The group first began

to champion civil liberties of necessity more than choice, as its own members' and colleagues' academic freedoms were challenged in Communist-phobic America.

The first such challenge came in 1937, when Dr. Ellis Freeman, SPSSI member and a psychologist at the University of Louisville, was investigated by a private right-wing group known as the American Legion. In America at this time, private and state groups alike worked to root out Communist influences from mainstream society. In response to his investigation, Freeman filed a civil suit to defend his reputation. The presiding judge found that "Dr. Freeman is a public servant in a public instituition supported by public taxes. He has no privacy to violate…These gentleman of the American Legion did nothing any citizen doesn't have the right to do; they inquired into the character and record of a teacher and the things he taught our young people. They are to be commended." (Krech and Cartwright, 1956, p.473; Sargent and Harris, 1986, p.45). The dangerous precedent set by the finding would make it even easier for such investigations to be conducted in the future.

At an SPSSI council meeting held in response to the judge's decision, members issued a statement condemning the finding as "potentially dangerous to civil liberties of the teacher and research worker." The meeting minutes record that the council instructed its secretary to communicate with ACLU about the trial. Nothing came of that communication. Similar attempts to protest SPSSI member Isador Krechevsky's professional demotion because he was a Jew likewise met with little success. SPSSI's earliest attempts to defend civil liberties were yet feeble (Sargent and Harris, 1986).

Throughout the 40s and 50s, such attempts continued and grew more effective. When Columbia University fired SPSSI member George Hartmann for being a conscientious objector to World War II, SPSSI launched its own private investigion and helped fund the breach of contract suit which he eventually won (Sargent and Harris, 1986). SPSSI's civil rights activism and its other efforts to defend minorities' rights mentioned earlier in the section on inclusion and exclusion might also be recalled here.

But the group's successes in this area have been uneven. As I discuss in some detail below, the society was helpless in defending former society president Watson against both civil and state prosecutions for communist sympathies. These experiences further served to disillusion the idealistic society with its initial assumptions of the inviolability of certain freedoms. The Cold War era permanently added the defense of civil liberties to the society's agenda. By 1950, the society had already committed to the cause monetarily, forming an academic freedom fund that could help those whose liberties had been violated defend selves in a court of law. The issue became prominent enough for social psychologists in general that in 1954, Gordon Allport, one of the first historians

of social psychology, wrote that the field's central question at that time was "how is it possible to preserve the values of freedom and individual rights under mounting conditions of social strain and regimentation?" (Allport, 1954, p.4). While no longer a central focus of social psychology per se, this question is still critical to SPSSI's work, as well as for the civil society endeavor. The paradox of open affiliation is inherent in the visions of both.

We have seen, then, that SPSSI was dedicated to and successful in promoting at least five issues critical to contemporary models of civil society: inclusion of marginalized groups; respectful public discourse; public education; the relationship of the individual to the group; and the defense of civil liberties. As a socially active association committed to these values, it provides a useful empirical model for civil society studies. In the next section, I examine the challenges posed to the work of such an organization by other social spheres.

Challenges to SPSSI's Efforts

In his proposal for the investigation of the interactions of civil society with a variety of other social spheres, civil society researcher Jeffrey Alexander suggests that the interplay between any two spheres can be described in terms of "facilitating inputs, destructive intrusions, and civil repairs" (Alexander, 1998, pp.8). While conservative theorists, he writes, as well as the elites in any one sphere, would be inclined to emphasize that sphere's facilitating inputs to the civil sphere, leftists would focus instead on the damaging incursions of such spheres into the civil space. He concludes that "neither side of this argument can be ignored in the effort to theorize the relation between civil society and other kinds of social institutions in a general way" (Alexander, 1998, pp.8).

If the previous section of this article focused on the "facilitating inputs" of one organization within the scientific sphere into civil society, this section focuses on the destructive incursions not *by* that same society but *into* it. Throughout its history, SPSSI's work to promote the values of a civil society has met with challenges from every other sphere: market, state, civil society, and even science itself. I here examine the sorts of challenges posed by each sphere, concluding with a look at the challenges posed internally by SPSSI's own members. In every case except the latter, this challenge came in the form of a threat by the power of each sphere to SPSSI's alleged inherent source of power, scientific authority. This analysis reveals both the fragile nature of that authority, as well as the threats to civically-oriented work that can be expected by any similarly oriented society, whatever its source of influence.

Challenges from the Market

Many today are still naïve enough to believe scientific work isolated from the pressures of the market so evident in all other areas of society. While the market influence is less obvious in the scientific world, particularly in the purely research as opposed to commercially or politically oriented realms, it is still a critical force. Until scientists stop needing to eat, they will always be influenced by the market forces.

Given its own later bowing to market forces, it is ironic that SPSSI was first formed in large part to protect psychologists and others from the market forces that devastated America during the Great Depression. As hard economic times often breed association, it was not alone. In the words of a 1939 editorial, "in the cellar of the great Depression, new organizations sprouted like mushrooms" (*New America*, 1939; qtd in Harris, 1986, p.1).

Aside from working to protect jobs, form unions, and support the unemployed – goals common to many of the newly formed groups - more radical SPSSI members hoped to help society identify and overcome the pervasive market influences that left no social space untouched. Leaders like Goodwin Watson and George Hartmann believed that the greatest threat posed by American capitalism was not its manifest instability but, rather, its hidden and total impact. They sought not merely the protection of employment rights, but rather a complete overhaul of all major institutions affecting social identity (Harris, 1986, 12). This attitude is reflected in such works *Industrial Conflict*, the Marxist society publication mentioned above (Finison, 1986; Nicholson, 1997).

This radical strain is important as a point of comparison for the society's later positions. Even at the time of its founding, however, socialists like Watson and Hartmann were far from a majority of the society. As society historian Harris records, "on the issue of social class and its relevance to the process of political change, SPSSI members held both radical and conservative views. While some were union activists and most were sympathetic to the plight of the average worker, the majority held the opinion that the labor movement would never be more than one of the many pressure groups operating in the political arena" (Harris, 1986, p.10). The more conservative SPSSI members were therefore satisfied with the minimal advances the society was able to make in protecting laborers, particularly psychologists. Its work to establish the APA's Joint Committee on Employment was one example of the more moderate steps that the society took to address the economic crisis (Miller, 1986, p.128)

But from the start, the society was subject to the very forces it sought to curb. Though it hoped to protect both science and society from determination by market forces, even those very efforts required funding. In this plight, the society joined psychology as a whole, a field which was just beginning to

establish itself in American society in the early decades of this century. Though the organization was originally formed to advance a social rather than a professional agenda, SPSSI's social ideals could not isolate it from the pressures of professionalization affecting the budding field. As Morawski has described, as the profession began to grow, its practitioners realized that "psychology would require the kind of financing needed for any laboratory science. Psychologists began speaking up about these material requirements, turned to government agencies and philanthropic foundations for assistance, or, like the founders of the Psychological Corporation, some psychologists attempted to reinvest part of the profits from applied work into research programs" (Morawski, 1986, p.114). A variety of strategies were thus employed toward securing funding for psychological study. In the process, scientific independence was sacrificed for that monetary need.

In turn, that professional positioning required served to legitimate psychological authority. By forming networks with schools, businesses, and other private and public institutions, psychology insured its own financial security even as it gained the respect of those supporting it. The school psychologist became a fixture. Managers consulted social psychology for insight into controlling employees. Administration and psychology became increasingly linked as the profession revealed itself useful in providing new ways of calculating and explaining human behavior (Nicholson, 1997, p.42).

The unfortunate, though not necessarily unavoidable, consequence of these growing alliances was a decrease in the distance psychologists could maintain from any of the institutions. SPSSI members were among those serving as consultants to schools and businesses, and even these more radical, socially-active psychologists were affected by financial inertia. Once radical leader Goodwin Watson, deeply affected by the political lessons of the personal investigations examined below, was chief among their ranks. After World War II, Watson devoted his energies not to political activism and social action research, but instead to the running of so-called T-groups, focus groups for the highest executives in corporate America. He claimed to be continuing in his efforts for social change by helping executives become more sensitive to the forces at work in group dynamics. Group sessions centered around topics such as "On Giving and Receiving Help" and "Improving Interpersonal Perception" (Nicholson, 1997, p.54). But even Watson's professed attitude toward corporate heads themselves had changes. Whereas once he had denounced them as oppressors of the underclasses, by the 1950s Watson had come to see senior executives and their businesses as society's great hope, as socially-minded organizations that could provide workers with a sense of home and care. The once-tyrants had now "enlarged their concern not only for workers but for the communities in which they operate," Watson argued. "The higher the level of management the greater appears to be the focus on purpose and values…Profit is not the only determinant." (Watson, 1963; qtd in Nicholson, 1997, 54).

The genuineness of Watson's claims is difficult to determine. As we will see, during the post-war years Watson grew more conservative in his public statements as a result of multiple prosecutions for communist activity. But given the increasing numbers of psychologists employed by institutions outside science and academia, his shifted sentiments should by no means be considered anomalous. Many of SPSSI's members underwent a similar shift, and over the course of the century its market reform activities and educational efforts dropped off. SPSSI's own professional concerns, it seemed, had compromised its critical stance: an initially market-wary organization almost entirely ceased its activities in that regard.

Had corporations really changed? Had CEOs become the new social hope, as Watson maintained? Or had scientific authority and the socially-active agenda of an organization based in it merely fallen prey to an inescapable market force? Conservative civil society theorists would assert that while perhaps Watson's view was overly optimistic, capitalism does indeed facilitate democratic values, and is in fact inextricable from them. Leftist theorists would adopt the opposite position. John Hall has noted the dangers of relying upon the market sphere in the construction of civil society given its tendency toward political conservatism. "In the face of social protest that causes disruption to business and profit," Hall explains, "capitalists and middle classes more generally revert to supporting the party of order. In a nutshell, this segment is highly opportunistic and thus not a reliable base on which to build a civil society" (Hall, 2000, p.52). Genuine or not, Watson's vision of dependable corporate values is no more than a pipe dream for liberal society theorists.

Historian Peter Franks' "A Social History of American Psychology up to the Second World War" regards this trend in SPSSI's history toward corporate partnership not as a new development but rather as a fundamental element of the organization's composition. He demonizes SPSSI's founders as manipulative champions of the rich, denouncing social psychology as a whole as "reconstructed liberalism's rationalization and understanding of the change to bureaucratic society of controlled consumption" (Franks, 1975). SPSSI uses social concern, Franks argues, as a thin veil to conceal its larger project of increasing the power of the market and government over the individual.

Between Franks' charge that SPSSI has always been a market tool, and Watson's belief that the market could itself become SPSSI's tool for effecting social change, we can surely find some middle ground. The most radical of SPSSI's original positions on economic reform was neither financially tenable nor representative of the group as a whole. With time, the organization was forced to find ways to support its work, and those professional means compromised its ends as originally defined. But there was no mailicious intent to the trajectory, as Franks maintains. The society bowed to financial needs, and its political agenda was altered as a result.

The real question is whether that bowing is a necessary fact of capitalist society. Is it possible for organizations – professional or otherwise - to maintain a critical distance from the financial institutions which support them? Again, leftist theorists would say that it is not. As John Ehrenberg writes, “there is no reason to expect that the better argument can prevail in civil societies that are so penetrated by the market” (Ehrenberg, 1999, p.224). In this view, an echo of Horkheimer, Adorno, Gramsci, Marcuse, and others, rationality is itself a market product. The rationality of science would not be immune to this charge.

SPSSI’s perpetual internal debates about the society’s trend toward market cooperation instead of distanced criticism may offer a way out of this pessimistic conclusion. Despite its clear shift toward market acceptance, SPSSI’s critical strain has persisted throughout its history, in word if not action. Were another Great Depression to hit tomorrow, SPSSI would likely resume some form of the work organizing economic reform which it began years ago. Less sensationally, there is no reason to think that a shift in the orientation of the society’s membership could not allow it to regain some of that original critical distance, and not even necessarily from any particular political position. Because of its emphasis on self-evaluation, SPSSI’s critical tradition has been maintained for 75 years, contrary to the predictions of the most negative Marxist models. Scholars at both ends of the political spectrum might be interested in this continuity of a critical tradition, whether or not they support its content. I return to this point below.

Challenges from the State

At its founding, SPSSI’s leaders envisioned productive interactions with the state to effect social change. Watson even cited one of SPSSI’s main impetuses for formation as “the need to bring the scientist one step closer to the statesman’” (Watson, 1936; qtd in Harris, 1986, 12). While as we have seen SPSSI had its share of positive interactions with the state, and was able to influence legal and policy decisions, it has been an uneasy relationship. Watson’s vision proved greatly naïve, much to his own detriment, as well as to that of the society as a whole.

World War II marked psychology’s entrée into the political world. Heavily recruited by the American government to advise officials on wartime domestic and foreign policy, psychologists found themselves a numerous population in Washington D.C. (Herman, 1995,). It was, in part, a thrilling move, as from the seat of power political change could be effected much more quickly and directly. Optimistic (and elitist) members of SPSSI saw in that move a new era in American society, one in which statesman and scientist would, in fact, work side by side (Nicholson, 1997, p.49; Finison, 1986). But that power proved both

elusive and expensive. Elusive, because government scientists soon realized that their advice might or might not be taken, their words perhaps not even recorded, depending on competing political factors. Time and again, the voice of science was overpowered by that of state. By the end of the war, SPSSI no longer had to worry about how to get psychology *into* arenas of power. As Ian Nicholson, who has studied SPSSI's, and in particular Watson's activities during this era, explains, "the war had done that for them. What had to be overcome was the problematic interface between psychological expertise and policy formation" (Nicholson, 1997, 49).

Political power proved expensive, because not only was science ignored, its authority was also challenged, at a significant price to its legitimacy. Politically-active scientists, like other activist Americans at the time, were treated with great suspiscion by those wary of communist conspiracy. In the wartime rush of new Washington employees, many government officials became concerned that a Red might be among their numbers. The infamous House Committee on Un-American Activities (HUAC) was the Congressional body responsible for investigating that possibility, and it left no ruddy stone unturned.

In 1941 Goodwin Watson was offered the job of Chief of the Section on Analysis in the Foreign Broadcast Monitoring Service of the Federal Communications Commission. As a socialist, he was opposed to the war. He eventually accepted the position, however, for it "offered him in an instant what years of unrewarding political struggle had failed to achieve: government recognition as an expert and a clear sense of direction" (Nicholson, 43). He believed, too, that his scientific knowledge of international psychology uniquely qualified him for the job.

Almost upon arrival in Washington, he learned that he was being investigated by the HUAC for participation in communist activities. Texas Representative Martin Dies was leading the investigation of 39 government officials deemed "irresponsible, unrepresentative, radical and crackpot." (Dies; qtd in Nicholson, 1997, p. 46) As was standard procedure for such investigations, the committee performed full background checks on each employee, violating individuals' privacy in the name of national security and the defense of the constitutional government. Watson was asked to appear before the committee, where he apologized for some of his more radical statements and affirmed his love of and loyalty to the USA. He also told investigators that his radical leftist views were formed by the Depression and but had changed in response to both the Hitler-Stalin pact and the progressive governmental reforms of the New Deal.

In spite of his apology, the Committee concluded that Watson's "membership and association…and views and philosophies expressed in

various statements…constitute subversive activity" (qtd in Nicholson, 1997, p.46). A rider calling for Watson's termination was appended to a bill whose main content called for the payment of thousands of other federal employees, a bill President Roosevelt could not afford to delay. He signed it, but stated that he viewed the HUAC rider as "not only unwise and discriminatory, but unconstitutional…an unwarranted encroachment upon the authority of both the executive and judicial branches" (qtd in Nicholson, 1997, p.47). Watson left Washington, his reputation and utopic vision of a scientifically-managed democracy both irreparably tarnished.

During those years, Watson and SPSSI learned how naïve they had been about the relationship of science and politics. Any number of political forces could and would interfere with the independence of scientific authority. While in Washington, Watson reported back from the political jungle as follows: "Bumping against controls from his chief, from Civil Service…from jealous competitors, from Congressional investigators, and press misinterpretation, the innovator, bruised in spirit, gradually subsides intot he approved bureaucratic torpor." (Watson, 1945, 2). It had also been a lesson in democracy. Dies and HUAC had been able to impose their will upon an opposed Senate and president. As Nicholson relates, the experience "demonstrated conclusively that psychological expertise could not function independently of political circumstances no matter how incisive it might be. Psychologists had to know the system and who was in the system…They needed to realize that the relationship between policy implementation and empirical research was in a constant state of flux." (Nicholson, 1997, p.48)

In the wake of these realizations, SPSSI adopted a much more delicate political agenda, and conservative activist approach. In the 1942 yearbook, Watson focused on improving morale in labor unions, every proposal to that end directed toward federal action rather than at the trade union level (Finison, 1986). A shift had begun from a focus on more radical action at the grass-roots level to more conservative top-down reform, with the scientist above rather than alongside the citizen. Shortly before appearing before the HUAC, Watson summed up this more cautious, expert-led form of social action in a utopian essay on social engineering: "We have a body of technical skills and a growing collection of relevant facts obtained from careful research. We make this available to responsible authorities, helping them do more quickly, more easily, more smoothly, and more effectively the things which it has long been their job to do." (Watson, 1943; qtd. in Nicholson, 1997, p.49). Society members had learned that if one is to have a voice at all in the governmental arena, it must be as apolitical as possible. Signs of either a specific political agenda, or of the desire to effect political change through non-governmental means, would disqualify action in the state sphere.

This move toward value-neutral science marked a dramatic change for a once activist organization. In 1946, David Krech wrote in the society's journal that "in social research the social scientist is the expert on the *research* formulation of the problem, on interpretation, on analysis, on understanding. But he must seek the original formulation of his problems from the man of social action" (Kretch, 1946, p.4; qtd in Nicholson, 49). Only ten years before, the group had been founded as one *of* formulators, actors, applied scientists. Political threats to scientific authority had all but paralyzed those intentions. Watson and others were well aware of the shift that had occurred, but felt powerless in the face of it. In 1945 he published some of his more tragic conclusions about the political process:

> Accomodation to the policies and values of those who make the strategic decisions may be slow, but it is insidious and inescapable…One can rationalize for a time that compromise at some points is necessary for effectiveness at others. After a while the compromises are made without even the self-deception that some larger good will somehow be served. This leads to the distrust of one's own values, disintegration of character, and the demise of personality (Watson, 1945; qtd in Nicholson, 1997, p.56).

Political reality had crushed Watson's idealistic fervor. The powers of the state had nullified those of science, obstructing SPSSI's ability to act independently in the civic sphere.

While the extremity and pessimism of this shift did not last much beyond the immediately post-war years, many writers on SPSSI's past view its members' wartime political experiences as a critical turning point in the form and content of the organization's activity. In terms of the scheme proposed above, the war shifted the emphasis of both the "why" and the "how" of SPSSI's work. From that time onward, Watson advocated SPSSI's dissemination of value-neutral research about society to those in positions of authority. Research was thus to avoid any valued or political motivation, and its results were to be implemented from above, not below.

At the same time, a commitment to social change remained, and the tragedy of Watson's experience gave way to the prevailing optimism of the postwar period. Scientists benefited from a tremendous surge in government research funding, as well as government interest in the products of that research. If SPSSI had become less politically critical, it seemed to have less reason to be. The government had provided not only financial support but also political support – by publicly affirming its faith in scientific authority, the profession seemed to gain much of the power it had lost during the war (Morawski, 1986, 121). As Nicholson has written, "society had demonstrated its willingness to at least consider putting the society on a scientific footing. Under

these circumstances, politically pointed analysis would be anachronistic" (Nicholson, 1997, p.55).

What were the lessons the wartime chapter of SPSSI's history? First, political challenges to scientific authority proved sufficiently powerful to force SPSSI into an apolitical position. HUAC was able to intimidate SPSSI severely enough that in the postwar era it retreated from its prior political agendas and methods. If socially active groups are to be kept from existing at the mercy of state power, there must be checks in place to prevent a group's political devastation by the state. While America learned this lesson well as Cold War investigations grew unmanageable in the McCarthy era, its experience showed that democracy does not by any means ensure the free existence of social groups. Any civil society scheme must account for the intrusion of state power into that of other spheres to the detriment of the social network.

Second, in the postwar era, state confidence in science proved that government power may be wielded constructively and effectively to aid other sectors. State support boosted scientific authority tremendously, an effort which likewise restored the faith of scientists in the state which many had just months earlier resented for its disregard for civil liberties. Such reciprocal boosting of power between state and civil-society-oriented groups is ideal. Only as public and state confidence in scientific efforts was restored could SPSSI and organizations resume the social activism they had been too intimidated to continue.

Taken together, these conclusions indicate the range of possible interactions between state, civil society, and any other sphere, in this case science. The powers of the first and last to advance the second will not simply work in harmony, as Watson had so utopically envisioned in 1939, nor need the state nullify the third sphere's authority, as effectively occurred for SPSSI during the wartime years. They can, indeed, work together productively, but that relationship is dynamic and tenuous, and must therefore be approached with some caution. Above all, groups must prepare for and recognize the inevitability of that interaction, as early SPSSI members did not.[16]

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[16] Jessica Wang has traced a similar story of political coercion among atomic scientists whose efforts at public education about nuclear power during the post-war era were thwarted by government surveillance and personal investigations. As she concludes similarly in that study, "coercion serves to maintain civil society in so far as it guarantees the rule of law and enforces the civility of relationships within both private and public life. That same coercive power, however, threatens civil society when it is put to the private purposes of the individual public officials who make up the state, or when it exerts a level of surveillance and control that curtails the political functions of the publoic as a social space for discussion and debate. Hence the relationship between state and society is always an uneasy one, for the state simultaneously guarantees the vitality of civil society and threatens its eradication" (Wang, 2002, p. 333).

Challenges from Civil Society

Watson's troubles did not end with his departure from Washington. In the post-war years, despite the low political profile he tried to adopt, he was again persecuted for Communist activities, this time by a private organization called the American Legion. This section examines this episode as exemplary of the sorts of challenges that may be posed to an organization by groups within "civil" society itself.

During the McCarthy Era, not only government agencies but also private right-wing organizations undertook investigations of citizens in the hopes of eradicating the Communist presence from America. These private groups derived their power not from the state, nor from the market, but from society itself. Fearful of Communist conspiracy, many Americans felt that their rights and freedoms were more secure the more aggressive such groups became. In this sense, such right-wing organizations were of the people, by the people, and for the people, violating civil liberties to protect them, and should therefore be located within the civil society sphere. The activities of groups like the American Legion hardly seem "civil" today. But in Cold War America, their work was popularly supported in the name of democratic values.

Watson first caught the attention of the American Legion while working at a guidance center in New Rochelle, New York in 1952, where he was advising a study on obedience and discipline of children. Because the Legion kept close tabs on public happenings and information, it was not long before his work there became known to them. One member of the Legion's Westchester County Americanism Commission saw a story about Watson's work in the local newspaper and remembered his name from the HUAC investigations during World War II. The member related the information to senior Legion officials. In response, the commander of the local Legion post ordered all posts in Westchester County to seek Watson's termination. The post published a 45-page report on Watson's communist activities, and initiated an organized campaign of pressure on contributors to the Guidance Center to cut off funding pending Watson's investigation.

Under such pressure, the Center conducted an inquiry to determine Watson's "political background and scientific impartiality" and found him unobjectionable in both realms. The Legion rejected their finding, claiming the Center members had been fooled by Watson's slick defenses. In response to the Legion's continued pressure, the Center agreed to its proposal of an independent investigation by a local community council. This council requested that Watson to prepare a response to the Legion's 45-page accusation. Watson's 72-page reply addressed each claim in turn, finally concluding that the Legion members' oppressive and deceitful tactics made them no better than the communists they claimed to investigate. "I find in [the American Legion authors

of the booklet] the same attempt to dupe and dominate, the careless disregard of truth when it happens not to serve their interests, the same efforts at suppression of those with whom they disagree, the same methods of character assassination, the same attitude of combat rather than cooperation, the same hostility to the free mind which I hate in the Communist," Watson wrote (Watson, 1954; qtd in Nicholson, 1997, p.52).

While unlike the HUAC, the local council could not find Watson guilty in the face of indisputable evidence to the contrary, this did not keep it from admonishing him. Even as it deemed that Watson had not been a conscious participant in the Soviet Conspiracy, it advised that he "exercise more caution in the future…over the selection of the persons in whose company he will exercise his freedom of speech.'" The council further blamed Watson for bringing the investigation upon himself through his political indiscretion (Nicholson, 1997, p.52).

The humiliation of the investigation as well as the bad press it generated drove Watson even further underground. The episode had cost him dearly in time, money, and public esteem. He ceased his contributions to left-wing journals, and withdrew from political campaigning altogether. He also became increasingly reluctant to sign public statements, effectively removing himself from the public sphere (Nicholson, 1997).

While the Cold War era was a unique moment in the history of democracy, the lessons revealed by this episode are still highly relevant today. First, the power of the American Legion reveals that civil society itself possesses a very real and potent force which can be used to challenge competing powers, like that of science in this case. Ironically, of course, what today appears the more civil cause – that championed by socially oriented scientists like Watson – was defeated in this case by the powers of the civil sphere gone awry. Perhaps we cannot truly consider the American Legion a civil society organization given its intolerant attitude. But Legion members would surely defend themselves by classifying communists among the fanatics that civil society schemes exclude. In the 1950s, public opinion was on their side.

The episode further reveals, then, that the power of civil society can be harnessed for negative purposes, and is therefore not in any sense inherently good. Rather, the force of public opinion can be applied to further any number of causes, not only by state and market but by the public sphere itself. If scientists pander to reason, the Legion pandered to fear, and the latter proved the stronger impulse in Cold War America. If reasoned discourse is to govern the civic realm, safeguards must be instituted not only against state and market powers, but also against those of society itself.

Finally, the episode reveals a trend noted above in the section on challenges from the state. Both political and social challenges undermined the power of SPSSI psychologists by calling into question their political neutrality. According to this formulation, scientific authority only holds in the absence of a political agenda. For example, as noted above, the guidance center's investigation sought to determine Watson's "political background and scientific impartiality." The juxtaposition is causal, not incidental. This relationship forces scientists to choose between authority and activism, with the latter divested of all scientific power. This formulation led many like Watson to abandon their social or political platforms.

Whether or not it is preferable to keep science and politics separate, however, the notion that they *can* be kept so, in any absolute sense, is implausible today. True neutrality is impossible, and to believe otherwise is to attribute to science more objectivity than it merits. By the same token, such belief deprives scientists of their social, political, and economic needs. If scientists are to help guide the way toward the construction of a vibrant civic sphere, their individual political leanings must be acknowledged and accepted to the extent that it is appropriate in any given situation. Otherwise, all scientific work, pure or applied, will always lie vulnerable to nullification by political accusations.

Watson's interaction with the American Legion, then, reveals that civil society possesses a potent power, which may be manipulated to incivil ends. In a politically intolerant environment, any voice may be deprived of power on political grounds. Organizations purportedly fighting for the same goals within the civil realm – freedom and democracy, for example – may undermine each other's powers if safeguards are not in place to ensure tolerant, reasoned discourse.

Challenges from Science

Challenges to SPSSI's civil society work have come from within the scientific realm as well. As discussed above, there has been an ongoing debate within psychology as to how application-oriented scientific research can or should be. For those who champion the cause of action-oriented science, SPSSI has been a model scientific organization, leading the way for other psychologists by encouraging scientific research on social issues, organizing meetings, journals, and funding to support their study (Krech and Cartwright, 1956). The subset of scientists who support not only applied science, but value-driven applied science, celebrate the work of the strain within SPSSI which has pursued research toward specific political and social ends. It is in this vein that SPSSI

has been called the “social conscience” of the APA, reminding psychologists of what this subset views as the centralits of values to all research (Krech and Cartwright, 1956; Harris, 1986; Morawski, 1986). By making psychologists wary of the“magic phrase ‘pure science,’” such supporters assert, SPPS has kept science on track (Finison, 1986, p.25; Morawksi, 1986).

But on the other side of the spectrum, purist scientists adamantly oppose the assertion that science should be application-oriented at all, let alone guided by more particular values in that orientation. As described above, prominent psychologists like Skinner and Boring first spoke out against applied science of any sort as antithetical to the scientific ethos. For these scientists, SPSSI and groups like it violate the objective basis they claim for the already weak (relative to harder sciences) scientific authority of psychology. These concerns are not only ideological but also professional: for these purists, scientific objectivity is all that can separate professional psychologists as “representatives of nature” from uncertified “quacks,” conmen, and other non-scientists claiming to treat the mind “as the representatives only of prejudice or ignorance” (Nicholson, 1997, p.42).[17] SPSSI’s applied, and particularly its value-driven, work was a threat to this scientific stronghold. As Morawski has described, “psychologists along with other professional social scientists had to speak with, to persuade many audiences. Empowerment of psychologists’ message depended on their recognized authority that, in turn, depended partly on the perception that they were not engaged in self-seeking activity but in scrupulous and undesigning work” (Morawski, 1986, p.119). From the time of its founding, SPSSI thus found its scientific authority challenged by those within the very realm assumed to ensure it (Stagner, 1986).

Over the course of the twentieth century, as psychology assumed a surer professional and disciplinary foothold; as applied science gained general legitimacy; and as recognition of the inevitable political and social forces that affect all science grew, one might have imagined that the controversy over activist groups like SPSSI would subside. However, that last trend of recognition has also forced the reemergence of the question of the source of scientific, particularly social scientific, authority. If psychology is accepted as a legitimate field of study today, psychological research is still far more suspect that that of the “hard sciences.” Modern Skinners and Borings still tout scientific neutrality as an ideal if not real characteristic of psychological study. For such researchers, as for SPSSI’s enemies within the state and civil society, the organization’s social orientation negates its scientific authority. Values and science are separate options, not partners.

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[17] The distinction between the professional and the ideological roots of these concerns should not be oversimplified. If scientists’ belief in the truth of scientific knowledge cannot be disentangled from their decision to enter into its pursuit, their subsequent professional status depends upon their defense of that truth.

Given this polarizing professional and ideological pressure, it is no wonder that SPSSI today is, by most accounts, far less politically active than it was at the time of its founding. As the trend has prompted society member Morawski to ask, “was it impossible to embrace the value neutrality associated with proper scientific conduct and simultaneously engage in political activism and culture criticism? Why have SPSSI’s more political and self-critical aspirations appear [sic] to have faded? What are the consequences of adopting the more conventional canons of scientific professionalism, on the one hand, and of minimizing involvement with the laity, on the other?” (Morawski, 1986, p.123)

All of these questions are relevant, first, to any social scientific endeavor, including that of civil society. How can such endeavors balance the objective distance necessary to their studies even as they seek to promote a particular social agenda? In particular, for those endeavors that emphasize human rationality, how can one rational vision be given priority over any other without the injection of the “irrational” grounds of social values? If scientists are to have a voice in the civil realm, their social agendas must be acknowledged and accepted as a part of their science rather than as its defeat. As discussed above in the context of challenges from both state and civil society spheres, the opposite expectation – that science can and will be neutral – is both dubious and paralyzing.

Second, these questions are critical to any organization hoping to impact the civic sphere through reasoned discourse. Scientifically-minded objectors may always undermine such discourse by asserting some value-based or irrational strain in an argument. “Reasoned discourse” must take these biases for granted, and not discount positions based upon their presence. Civil society is not a competition for objectivity, but a space for social and political exchange. The equation between reason and science must therefore be problematized. Arguments may be more or less reasonable within contemporary formulations of civil society depending on the degree to which they further the values of that society. So long as a position is tolerant and respectful of others, it is reasonable. Civil society organizations must be prepared to defend their work on these, as opposed to scientific, grounds. For on the latter, any cause may be attacked in the name of objectivity.

Challenges from Within

Throughout SPSSI’s history, its own members have been among its harshest critics. Perhaps the single greatest attribute of the society that has become clear to me through this study is its commitment to self-evaluation. Such evaluation may be more or less formal. In the mid-1950s an official membership survey was taken to determine whether or not the organization was living up to

its constituents' expectations. In 1986 a series of retrospective articles was commissioned to celebrate the society's fiftieth anniversary as well as to evaluate its progress until that point (Harris, 1986). But less formal self-examination occurs continuously, with every new president's agenda and every new action proposed. In both formal and casual capacities, the organization has proven itself relentlessly self-analytic.

This self-criticism is a testament to its members' commitment. As former society president Martha Mednick has written, "people are attached to [SPSSI] as to a home; it is a special place, which provides social and intellectual support for those who believe that their science and profession must have a social meaning and impact" (Mednick, 1984, p.176). It is toward the maintenance of that home that SPSSI members engage in its examination, assessing whether it has been or is becoming the dwelling they desire.

In many cases, it falls short of the expected mark. As we have seen, SPSSI has abandoned many of its early political and economic agendas in the face of various challenges to its scientific authority and professional stability. Members of more radical positions have lodged complaints to this effect. On the other side, those more scientifically-oriented members have charged that SPSSI is *too* politically active, and not sufficiently oriented towards research.

Toqueville has argued that private associations are the training grounds for civil society, teaching its members the principles of respectful social negotiation and respect. SPSSI is an excellent example of this phenomena. From the elitist to the populist, the scientific to the social, SPSSI has had to negotiate amongst a wide range of opinions about the organization's orientation. It has sought not to decide between them, but rather to vacillate among them, adopting different perspectives as determined by a voting body. And as founding member Ross Stagner recalls, "these disputes did not, as a rule, carry over into our personal relationships" (Stagner, 1986). This tolerant, democratic environment has allowed for the maintenance of these disparate views for more than 75 years. Former SPSSI president Harold Proshansky has written that "rarely, if ever, did SPSSI experience a crisis that could have split it fatally" (Proshansky, 1986, p.133). Rather, having worked to foster dialogue among competing perspectives, it has proved far more stable than any unitarily minded organization could hope to be. And as Toqueville might have predicted, SPSSI's efforts to encourage participation and ensure a voice for all individuals within the organization reflect and enhance the social agenda of democracy and egalitarianism promoted without.[18]

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[18] Whereas de Toqueville describes a strict progression to this process – first organizations cultivate respect and values among their members, and then they act upon them in society – I here make the weaker point of an unordered relationship between internal and external practices. Certainly in the case of SPSSI, if not more generally, internal organizational

As an organization empowered by science but directed towards civil society, SPSSI will always walk a fine line between the competing forces of scientific neutrality and social activism, elite reformism and popular politics. Like any healthy body, civil society included, it will always have to balance a variety of competing forces. So long as it can maintain its members' confidence, it can maintain their criticism. So long as it can maintain that criticism, it can never lose sight of all of its original, and contradictory, goals. That critical tradition may be SPSSI's most instructive legacy of all.

Conclusions and a Look Ahead

This article has examined the work of and challenges posed to the Society for the Psychological Study of Social Issues, an organization peculiarly situated on the border of the scientific and civil society spheres. Long before the modern revival of the concept of civil society, SPSSI members were working to advance such of its values as public education, respectful discourse, inclusion, the protection of civil liberties, and the connection of the individual to the group. Challenges posed to its scientific authority by the spheres of state, market, civil society and science alike have threatened its ability to act in the civil society sphere to promote the values it upholds. The lessons the organization has learned from each of these challenges remain critical to all organizations seeking to promote civil society today.

It has also examined two sets of tensions which can be traced throughout SPSSI's history, and which inform the work of any normative social science of the rational, that of civil society included. Between the inherent elitism of science and democratic values of respectful discourse; between the necessary neutrality of science and the desire for social engagement, the socially-active scientist walks a fine line. Can scientists in possession of privileged knowledge ever interact with the layman as respectful equals? Can scientists ever approach their work from a socially-oriented perspective and still maintain the authority of their position? These must remain open questions. Further research into the work of borderland organizations like SPSSI is clearly needed before any conclusions can be drawn. But if the history of SPSSI has demonstrated nothing else, it has shown the paradoxes inherent in the position of the socially-active scientist.

Finally, this paper has explored the more general relationship between science and civil society. Visions of civil society since the enlightenment have

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patterns may just as easily be seen as a microcosmic reflection of a social agenda as the cause of it.

prized reason as the basis of public discourse and interaction, never asking what values and power structures are inherent in that position. Meanwhile, scholars of science and society have long worked to understand the complex influence which science, as the pinnacle of Western rationality, holds upon civilizations which prize reason in this way. Much work remains to be done to further the dialogue among these various fields in order to better understand the complex, pervasive, and often hidden interactions of scientific authority with the other social spheres. What *is* clear at this point is that such dialogue is both indispensable and inevitable. As indicated earlier, through a number of international conferences and projects, scientists have begun to explore the connections between their work and the vision of civil society quickly gaining popularity throughout the world. In the spirit of civil society itself, it is time that civil society theorists met them halfway.

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